Promotion of E-Gurucool

2340. DR. AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the IT education major NIIT has launched a programme for promoting e-Gurucool;

(b) if so, the objectives and *modus operandi* thereof; and

(c) whether Government have decided to promote e-Gurucool throughout the country, especially in inaccessible regions, if so, the steps taken/being taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SU. THIRUNAVUKKARASAR): (a) Yes, Sir. The learning products and services under the e-Gurucool brand have been acquired by NIIT.

(b) The main objectives are :

Reaching the following to school students, school teachers and school administration.

— Over 1500 hours of digital content

— Computer-based expert support services

Modus operandi will be decided by NIIT.

(c) No, Sir.

Talwar Committee Report

2341. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have implemented recommendations of the Talwar Committee report on Extra Departmental staff;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government consider to implement the Pension Scheme and maternity leave benefit for the Extra Departmental staff as recommended by the Talwar Committee;

(d) Government's reaction thereto; and

(e) whether Government propose to open 'Panchayat Dak Seva Yojana' in rural areas; if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SU. THIRUNAVUKKARASAR): (a) and (b) Justice Talwar Committee (JTC), constituted to examine system of Gramin Dak Sevaks (earlier called Extra Departmental Agents), their conditions of employment, wage structure etc., made various recommendations in this regard which, *inter alia*, covered issues like status, grant of pension, leave including maternity leave etc. The recommendations of the JTC were carefully considered by Group of Ministers (GoM) and thereafter orders were issued by the Government on 17.12.1998 in full and final settlement of these recommendations and related pending issues. The package of benefits for Gramin Dak Sevaks extended through the said orders include:

(i) Increasing the allowance of Gramin Dak Sevaks by a factor of 3.25 for the period from 1.1.96 to 28.2.98.

(ii) Introducing the concept of time related continuity allowance (TRCA) in respect of Gramin Dak Sevaks in lieu of monthly allowance related to work load, *w.e.f.* 01.3.1998.

(iii) Increasing the amount of *ex-gratia* gratuity admissible to Gramin Dak Sevaks from Rs. 6,000/- to Rs. 18,000/-.

(iv) Introducing the concept of paid leave for Gramin Dak Sevaks @ 10 days for every half year without the provision of carry forward or encashment.

(v) Increasing office maintenance allowance admissible to Gramin Dak Sevak Sub Postmasters and Branch Postmasters from Rs. 25/- to Rs. 50/- per month.

(vi) Lump sum Severance Amount of Rs. 30,000/- on discharge of GDS from employment at the age of 65 years or death provided he/she completed 20 years of continuous employment. However in case of GDS who has completed 15—20 years of continuous employment, the Severance Amount will be Rs. 20,000/-. On absorption to regular

departmental post the severance amount will be Rs. 20,000/ - after continuous employment of 15 years.

(c) and (d) No, Sir. As regards the demand for pension, no Government sponsored social security scheme was found feasible when provision of payment of Severance Amount as a post-employment benefit was extended to Gramin Dak Sevaks. Government also considered the demand for granting of maternity leave to female GDSs but found not feasible.

(e) The scheme of Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Yojana is already in existence which aims at providing postal facilities to villages without a post office. Under this scheme a person nominated by the Panchayat is appointed as a Sanchar Kendra Agent (SKA) for a fixed monthly allowance for providing counter services and also for collection, conveyance and delivery of mail within Gram Panchayat where feasible. Commission is also paid for rendering additional services. The pre-requisites for a person to be nominated as Sanchar Kendra Agent are:

(i) Person should be a matriculate with age between 18 and 62 years.

(ii) Person should bear a good moral character and should have no criminal record.

Software Technology Parks

2342. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA:
SHRI HARISH RAWAT:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any plan to set up software technology parks across the country during the ensuing financial year;

(b) if so, the number of such parks likely to be set up; State-wise;

(c) the details of the financial assistance to be sanctioned for the same;

(d) whether any technical assistance from the foreign collaboration is being taken or proposed to be taken in setting up the parks; and